

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 14-169—sSB 70

Environment Committee

Government Administration and Elections Committee

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE GRANT OF PROPERTY INTERESTS IN
PROPERTY HELD BY THE DEPARTMENTS OF AGRICULTURE AND
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A PUBLIC USE AND BENEFIT LAND
REGISTRY**

SUMMARY: This act authorizes the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to designate department-owned lands as “lands of public use and benefit,” which include land used for conservation, public enjoyment, or recreational purposes, or activities to improve or maintain these purposes.

The act requires the commissioner to establish, by January 1, 2015, a publicly accessible geographic information map system and database that has a public use and benefit land registry. The registry must be able to provide certain identifying information on (1) land owned by DEEP, other state agencies, municipalities, and land conservation organizations, and (2) state-owned water supply lands. By the same January 1 deadline, the commissioner must make the registry available on DEEP’s website and include the identifying information for three state parks he selects. He must update the registry quarterly with information for 10 more state parks.

Lastly, the act specifically allows the DEEP and Department of Agriculture (DoAg) commissioners to place conservation or preservation restrictions on any lands their departments own. By law, landowners (including the state) may create conservation restrictions in written instruments to maintain land or water areas predominantly in their natural, scenic, or open condition, or in agricultural, farming, forest, or open space use. Preservation restrictions are similar, but are meant to preserve historically significant structures or sites (CGS § 47-42a).

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

PUBLIC USE AND BENEFIT LAND REGISTRY

Required information

The act requires the registry to be able to provide at least the following information on the land:

1. its location and owner;
2. any applicable land categorizations based on the land’s use and level of protection;
3. information data sheets with any applicable deed, easement, survey, map,

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- and data for each parcel comprising the land; and
- 4. any available management and stewardship plans.

In establishing the registry, the DEEP commissioner must consult with all state agencies to identify state-owned lands of public use and benefit.

Under prior law, the commissioner, by October 1, 2014, had to (1) identify other state agencies' lands that are valuable for conservation purposes and (2) consult with the public health commissioner about any state-owned lands identified as water supply lands. The act eliminates this deadline and instead requires him to perform these tasks as part of establishing the public use and benefit land registry.

BACKGROUND

Related Act

PA 14-80 allows the DoAg commissioner to place a conservation or preservation restriction on the "Savin Farm" property in Lebanon.

OLR Tracking: KLM:KM:VR:ro